GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3880
ANSWERED ON:13.12.2000
INDO UK TIES
Y.S. VIVEKANANDA REDDY

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether during his recent visit, he had discussions with Foreign Secretary and Defence Secretary of U.K.;

(b) if so, the issues discussed and the outcome thereof; and

(c) the steps being taken by both the countries to remove their differences on Jammu and Kashmir and other international issues?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA)

(a),(b)&(c) Yes, Sir. External Affairs Minister visited the U.K in November 2000 at the invitation of his British counterpart.He exchanged views with the Rt. Hon. Robin Cook, MP, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and the Rt. Hon. Geoffrey Hoon, MP, Defence Secretary.
Various regional and multi-lateral issues of interest to India and the UK, including developments in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Fiji and UN peace-keeping operations in the context of Sierra Leone were discussed.
On J&K, British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook had saidduring his visit to India in April 2000, that serious dialogue requires restraint. He had also urged that the LOC should be respected and reiterated President Clinton`s statement that `The modern world does not permit boundaries to be redrawn in blood`. UK has welcomed the unilateral ceasefire in J&K announced on 19th November 2000 by the Government. Peter Hain, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, during his visit to New Delhi, on 20th November 2000 said `I welcome the Indian Government`s announcement of a unilateral ceasefire during the month of Ramadan.I hope that the militants and those who support them will respond positively to this encouraging move. I hope also that this will create a climate which encourages the resumption of dialogue between India and Pakistan.`